

creosote bush, blackbrush and other desert shrubs covering the area afford no vegetative screening. Only a limited number of visitors could find seclusion in the area.

C. Primitive and Unconfined Recreation: The WSA is within 250 miles of nine metropolitan areas. However, it is more than a three hour drive from all of them except Las Vegas. Most visitors from the other metropolitan areas would not consider this close enough for a weekend. The WSA is not big enough to attract vacationers by itself. However, it is in an area of other attractions including Death Valley National Monument, 40 miles to the west, and numerous California WSAs in addition to the contiguous WSA. The WSA is one and one-half miles from the Ash Meadows Road which connects Ash Meadows with Death Valley Junction and Pahrump. It is accessible with high clearance vehicles via the road which divides the unit.

The entire WSA is accessible to dayhikers and horseback riders, but it lacks special attractions. The landforms and plant life are not diverse or particularly scenic, and the hills are not high enough to be challenging. The most desirable destination for a dayhike is the climb up Shadow Mountain to the south in the California WSA. The area is not suited for backpacking because of its small size and narrow configuration. The visitor would have some opportunity to see wild horses.

By itself, the Resting Spring Range WSA does not offer outstanding opportunities for primitive recreation. It is too small, its configuration is restrictive, and it lacks diverse and scenic attractions.

D. Special Features: There are no identified special features in the WSA.

4. MANAGEABILITY

The small northern unit is not manageable as wilderness and neither is much of the southern unit because of accessibility. Drawing the boundary back to the steepest foothills of Shadow Mountain would eliminate much of the problem and create a better defined boundary. However, it would reduce the size of the WSA to where it would not be suitable for designation without designating the adjacent Resting Spring Range WSA.

Large, driveable washes penetrate all parts of the WSA. At least 80 percent of the small northern unit is affected. Most of these washes drain towards the well-traveled, nearby, Ash Meadows Road. Use of these washes seems to be minimal at present but, is anticipated to increase over time as the Pahrump area grows. Since there are no natural barriers to off-highway vehicle (OHV) use, extensive artificial barriers or regular patrols would eventually be necessary to retain wilderness values.

With the exception of the southwest boundary, which follows the California/Nevada State line, boundaries are impossible to locate on the ground. The north east and southern boundaries do not follow any physical or manmade features and cannot be identified on the ground easily.

Post-FLPMA mining claims cover the entire northern unit and several hundred acres of the north end of the southern unit.

5. ENERGY AND MINERAL RESOURCE VALUES

The WSA is largely composed of Precambrian and Cambrian marine sediments which have been displaced by normal faults, usually less than one mile in length. The Furnace Creek fault zone, over 18 miles long, terminates southward at the southwestern flank of Shadow Mountain. Another major normal fault passes through Stewart Valley and bounds the Resting Spring Range on its eastern flank. Quaternary alluvial fan deposits cover much of the lower slopes. Miocene tuffaceous lake beds occur north of the WSA and in small areas inside the north boundary.

Zeolites have been produced from the altered tuffs deposited in the alkaline lake beds just north of the WSA. The nearest mining district is the Johnnie District 15 miles to the northeast of the WSA where gold was mined from veins in the lower Cambrian Wood Canyon formation. The Nopah silver-lead-zinc mine and the Baxter silver-lead prospect several miles to the south of the WSA are the only other known prospects in the region.

The entire WSA is classified as having a low favorability for metallic and nonmetallic mineral resources due to the geology of the area.

The WSA has no favorability for uranium based on a lack of source rocks. It also has no favorability for oil and gas for the same reason. No oil and gas or thermal leases or applications are in the WSA. The WSA has a low favorability for geothermal resources.

6. SUMMARY OF WSA SPECIFIC PUBLIC COMMENTS

Nine comments were received on the Resting Spring WSA during the initial wilderness inventory in 1979. Six agreed with further study of the area and three disagreed. Six specific comments on this WSA and 2,327 general comments, stating the unit met wilderness criteria, were received during the intensive inventory in 1980. The general comments were in response to a mailing by a coalition of Nevada conservation groups seeking support for a number of areas. A few of the specific comments discussed wilderness values, but the remainder mentioned inadequate size, lack of outstanding opportunities or competing resource values.

One specific comment was received from Atlantic Richfield/Anaconda opposing wilderness designation. In addition, three general comments were opposed to any wilderness in the Esmeralda-So. Nye RMP area.

The Governor of Nevada recommended that the area not be designated wilderness.